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## TSANGAYA: THE TRADITIONAL ISLAMIC EDUCATION SYSTEM IN HAUSALAND

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### ABSTRACT

In the pre-colonial Hausaland, an Islam-based educational system existed for several centuries and had produced leaders, scholars, businessmen, government functionaries, etc. This paper taking Kano as its focus of attention, and generating data through personal discussions, interviews, document analysis and personal experience, examines the *Tsangaya* system. This study aimed of bringing light into its untold beautiful features which are from a leaf that could be borrowed and successfully used in the so-called formal system. The paper reveals that the *Tsangaya* had staged from elementary to advanced and had its distinct of pedagogy and at the top of which there is educational delivery. Some benefits of the *Tsangaya* found in this study such as the strong relationship between teacher and student, respect for knowledge either for students or teacher, blending activities between teaching and learning and daily morality that can be useful for the modern era.

Keywords: Education, Islam, Hausaland, System, *Tsangaya*, Traditional.

### ABSTRAK

*Pada masa pra-kolonial di Hausaland, sistem pendidikan berbasis Islam sudah ada selama beberapa abad dan telah menghasilkan para pemimpin, sarjana, pengusaha, dan pejabat pemerintah. Makalah ini memaparkan hasil penelitian tentang penggunaan sistem Pendidikan Islam (Tsangaya) di Kano, Nigeria. Data dihasilkan dari diskusi pribadi, wawancara, analisis dokumen dan pengalaman pribadi. Studi ini bertujuan untuk meneliti sistem Tsangaya yang diterapkan di perguruan tinggi sebagai salah satu contoh sistem pendidikan formal. Studi ini mengungkapkan bahwa Tsangaya telah dipergunakan dari tingkat dasar hingga mahir dan memiliki esensi pedagogi yang berbeda-beda. Beberapa keunggulan sistem Tsangaya yang ditemukan diantaranya adanya hubungan guru dan siswa yang kuat, menghormati pengetahuan untuk kepentingan siswa maupun guru, dan memadukan kegiatan mengajar dan belajar dengan esensi nilai-nilai moralitas yang sangat berguna bagi era modern ini.*

*Kata Kunci: Pendidikan, Islam, Hausaland, Sistem, Tsangaya, Tradisional.*

### INTRODUCTION

Islamic education can simply be defined as the educational system under Islam or approved by it. *Tsangaya* is one of the Islamic Education system developed in Nigeria. It is widely believed that the *Tsangaya* system has a long history of existence (Walker, 2012). Its origin can be traced to the old Timbuktu Scholastic culture. Unfortunately, it now comes to be identified with begging and destitution. Another opinion holds that it is informal and as such serves only as a breeding ground for hooligans and miscreants. It becomes normal to attribute violence and political brigandage to *Tsangaya* Schools. Some look at these schools with disdain, it said that they serve nothing to other than abuse the child. Others opinion of the total scrapping of these

schools is they have no role to play in the modern age. In an informal religious school namely *Almajiris*, it has been found that religious schools in this country are far from an “ideal” school.

This paper examines the origin, nature and history of the *Tsangaya* system. The aim is bringing into light its untold beautiful features, from which a leaf could be borrowed and successfully used in the so-called formal system. An attempt is made to trace the history of the *Tsangaya* system, the *Tsangaya* of how it is formed, the age at which a child is enrolled, chronology of titles, stages and pedagogy, school days and sessions, management and administration and graduation. Some distinguishing features of the system are also brought into light.

## METHOD

This study used exploratory research to investigate the *Tsangaya* system. The researcher tried to gain further insight about the *Tsangaya* system from all aspects include definition, history, stages, process, etc. The researcher started with the general idea about *Tsangaya* system as a tool to identify issues that could be the focus of future research. The instrument used in this study included document analysis (journal, book, university record and report), interview (educators and all part involved in *Tsangaya* system), and observation (observed many activities related to the *Tsangaya* system implementation).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Definition

The term *Tsangaya* is adopted from *Sangaya* in Kanuri, which means educational institution (Bano, Antonis, & Ross, 2011). Therefore, *Sangaya* is the original name while *Tsangaya* is a Hausa adulteration of the term (SWOT Foundation). Otherwise, the *Tsangaya* School known as *Makarantar Allo*, it derives its name from what is largely visible in it i.e wooden plates or *Allo* in Hausa. Apart from the popular name, *Tsangaya* has other names such as *Makarantar alkur'ani*, *Makarantar Muhammadiyya*, *Makarantar Toka*, e.t.c (Babajo, 2017). *Tsangaya* is defined as an area or a place where Al-Qur'an is thought and which is generally characterized by the assembly of a conglomeration of children, most of them whom carry their individual *Allo*, around a single teacher, most of the time with a whip in his hands (Abbas, 1978). It is also defined as any place, it could be a room, balcony, veranda, hut, guest room, tree shade, e.t.c, where the students is gathered for the purpose of learning Al-Quran (Imam, 2002). The main distinguishing feature is students reading from their *Allo* loudly.

To round it up, *Tsangaya* is a system of knowledge acquisition in which both the teacher and the students travel out of their places of origin, and in some cases remain there for the purpose of learning, mastering and memorizing Al-Quran, being ready and preparing in the process to face the hardships and tumults of life. This, to certain extent, resemble the system of *pesantren* and also the system of madrasa (Raihani, 2012).

### History of The Emergence of *Tsangaya*

Islam spread from the states such as Libya, Egypt, Morocco, Tunis and Algeria in North Africa, to West Africa south of the Sahara (Bakewell & Haas, 2007). The factors which pioneered and facilitated its spread were the Sufi orders, Muslim visitors, the itinerant scholars the traders and Muslim reformers. All of these served as teachers, promotor of literacy in Arabic script and language and Islamic sciences in general. When Islam was introduced to Kanem Bornu and became a state religion, Bornu gradually became the center for Qur'anic recitation more than any other town in Hausaland as Qur'anic teaching and recitation became its specialty. This fact was attested by Caliph Muhammad Bello, the son of Shehu 'Uthman Dan Fodiyo (Yola, 2002).

The *Tsangaya* system enjoyed a great support and encouragement from the *Mais* (a title for Bornu rulers) (Shehu, 2006). The system has produced rulers, religious reformers judges,

administrators, clerics and scholars and a sequence of men literate in the Arabic language (Taiwo, 1980). *Tsangaya* originated in the reign of *Mai Ali Gaji* (1503 C.E) who encouraged and supported the establishment of such centers in many areas for the spread of literacy. The prominent is such among centers include *Kukawa*, *Geidam* and *Damaturu*. These centers produced a number of experts in the writing and recitation of the Qur'an. The *Mais* supported and generously financed these Qur'anic schools and their scholars. It influences the Qur'anic school system in Bornu which spread to the neighboring Hausa states.

It is explained that after successfully conforming the political, social, religious, economic and intellectual life of Hausaland to Islamic teachings, the *Mujaddid* Shehu Usmanu Dan Fodiyo instructed all the learned in Al-Quran to disperse into nook and corners of the Caliphate and impart its knowledge in order not to remain idle, on one hand, and, on the other hand, to rescue the populace from continuously wallowing in the river of ignorance. These people are compliance with the orders of the Shehu, started gathering students for this purpose. Parents then regarded it as their own contributing quota to hand over their wards to the *Mallam* in order to enhance the jihad by having children learned in the Qur'an who would successfully shoulder the responsibilities of the future generation in accordance with the teachings of Islam (Maibushra, 2005). The teachers then along with their students were adequately catered for as per their feeding, accommodation and security. Rulers were extremely happy to host these types of schools and regarded it as a religious duty to shoulder all their responsibilities, in addition to the support rendered by the society. Begging and destitution in this system of education were then unheard of as their principal remote cause, governmental and societal neglect were not in existence.

The Jihad leaders continued to spread and encourage this system of education. Worthy of mention is the role played by the Jihad leaders, especially Shehu 'Abdullahi bin Fodio, in bringing the pronunciation of Arabic letters close to their similes in Hausa and Fulfulde. Examples are:

{ط} in Arabic language which is pronounced as {D} in Hausa language

{ق} in Arabic language which is pronounced as {K} in Hausa language

This helped greatly in making pronunciation of Arabic letters easy among the teaming of Hausa and Fulfulde speaking population, and continued to be in operation up to our present time (Imam: 2002, 2).

### **The Process of Forming a *Tsangaya***

A teacher (*Mallam*) usually comes out or rather travels out along with his students in search of a place to reside, solely for the purpose of learning and imparting the knowledge of the Qur'an. On reaching a comfortable area the teacher strolls around in order to ascertain which part of the neighborhood is harmless and which part is harmful. When he sees everything for himself, he warns his students against going to the harmful areas so that they don't turn out to be amoral and lose sight of the purpose for being there, i.e., learning the Qur'an. He also shows them where to fetch water whenever they are in need. All of these are done in order to realize a conducive learning environment.

A relatively quiet and shadowy area are then earmarked as the recitation zone, *Kiskali*. A little hut is constructed for the purpose of bathing, urinating and defecating. Another area is also reserved for the night prep. Fire sticks are garnered and gathered in the center and the entire area is surrounded with smaller tree branches. A log of wood which is to serve as a chair or bench is inserted and tied at each reasonable interval. This log is called *Gargari* The *Kiskali* that serves both as a hostel and a class area. This is how *Mallam* and his *almajirai* (students) secure a place to stay which eventually matures into a *Tsangaya*.

### System of Enrolment into The *Tsangaya*

Mode of enrolment into the *Tsangaya* depends on its type. In one type admission is through either of the following three ways; (I) *Gardi* (Young adult) comes along with his students and seeks permission from the *Alaramma* (the overall teacher of the *Tsangaya*) to be admitted; (II) Students enroll themselves individually; (III) Parents from different areas enroll their wards into the school before the teacher leaves his town and takes off. In another type, temporary migrants known as '*Yan ci-rani*', contact the teacher, introduce themselves individually and gain admission. In another type: *Gardi* (Young adult) comes as a temporary migrant and event settles with his family. He begins to teach some children enrolled into his school and along with whom he came from his hometown. Gradually, children from neighboring houses are admitted.

### The Age at Which a Child is Enrolled

According to the Islamic system of child upbringing when a child is weaned character building and ethical training begins. The basis upon which a child is enrolled into *Makarantar Allo* at a very tender age is a tradition of the Prophet, in which he is reported to have said: "*Every child is born pure in nature. (It is by virtue of the orientation he receives from) his parents (that they) turn him into a Jew or a Christian or a Pagan.*" (Al-Bukhari, 2001).

Perhaps, it is in compliance with this hadith that a child is enrolled into the resident *Tsangaya* at the age of four or five and in some areas, as earlier as when a child begins to babble (Amuda, 2011; Ilori, 1981).

### Stages and Pedagogies in The *Tsangaya*

There are basically seven stages which students pass through and each has its distinct pedagogy. These stages are as follows:

#### 1. The Mimicking stage.

This is the beginner stage. A newly admitted child usually listens to the recitation of others. Eventually, he gets used to the rhythm of a particular recitation and starts mimicking. The *Mallam* observes each student carefully and as soon as he notices that the child starts mimicking the recitation of others he moves him to the next stage.

#### 2. The *Biyawa* stage.

This stage is characterized by the student reading after the teacher. He is taught the opening phrases of the Qur'an first. The teacher reads to the student part by part so that the latter can easily read after the teacher. For example;

*A'udhu---Billabi---Minash Shaitanir---Rajimi*  
*Bismillahi---Ar Rahmani---Ar Rahimi---etc*

The following is the arrangement of the *Sumar* according to which the teacher follows in teaching the student at the *Biyawa* stage: *Suratul Fatihah*; *Suratun Nas*; *Suratul Falaq*; *Suratul Iklas*; *Suratul Masad*; *Suratun Nasr*; *Suratul Kafirun*; *Suratul Kauthar*; *Suratul Ma'un*; *Suratu Quraish*; *Suratul Fil*. This usually takes weeks or even months to complete. It is because the teacher read to the child bit by bit and once in a time. It is only when he is satisfied when the student masters and memorizes a portion that he recites for the next portion. Reaching the end of *Suratul Fil* signifies the end of this stage. The teacher asks the child's father to buy an *Allo* (wooden plate) for him in preparation for the next stage (Humphreys, Moses, Kaibo, & Dunne, 2015).

#### 3. The *Babbaku* Stage.

The use of *Allo* begins at this stage. All of the letters are contained in the above mentioned eleven *Sumar* (plural form of *Surah*) are written boldly on the student's *Allo*, one after the other. The words are written without the accompanying vowels and the student is taught only by the letters. It begins with the following:

- |                  |     |
|------------------|-----|
| a. <i>Alu</i>    | (ا) |
| b. <i>Ambaki</i> | (ع) |
| c. <i>Wau</i>    | (و) |
| d. <i>Zal</i>    | (ذ) |

This makes up the word *A'udhu* (أعوذ)

The arrangement of the *Sumar* in which only letters are taught is similar to that of the *Biyawa* stage. Whenever the teacher becomes satisfied when the student has learnt and memorized the written portion he asks him to wash it away at a specified area reserved only for washing away writings of the Qur'an. The washed away portion is not poured in the gutter or in any dirty area for this is regarded as belittling and stampeding over the sanctity of the Qur'an.

#### 4. The *Farfaru* Stage

This is advancement of the *Babbaku* stage but it is on a higher degree. The student is taught by the correct pronunciation of each letter along with its accompanying vowel. the previous stages, the student here begins with the *Basmalah* and it usually goes as follows:

*BA, da wasali kasa ita ce BI, BIS ta dauri SIN*

This roughly means

*Letter B plus vowel I plus letter S is pronounced as BIS'*

After the *Basmalah* comes *Suratul Fil*. It then goes on and on down to *Surah al-Nas* which is the end of this stage.

#### 5. The second *Biyawa* Stage (*Haddatu*).

The student have been acquainted and conversant with the pronunciation of letters without and with vowels is now introduced to the correct recitation of the Qur'an, word by word. *Basmalah* and a verse or two in *Surah al-Fatihah* are written on the *Allo*. The teacher recites each word and the student reads after him two to three times. He will be left to go and recite the learnt area loudly several times until he masters and memorizes it. He then comes and reads before the teacher after which the next area is read out for him. The teacher points to each word with his finger when he reads it and the student points to it with *Tsinke* (toothpick).

When the entire written portion is memorized by the student comes to the teacher and conducts a memory test, which is called *Hadda*. The teacher withdraws the *allo* and holds it away from the sight of the student while the latter reads out the withheld portion from memory. The student must prove to the teacher that he has really memorized the written portion. The student must is thereafter asked to go and wash off the memorized portion (*wanki*) so that new portion could be written for him by the teacher. Sometimes students use sandpaper (*Samfeja*) to polish and smoothen their *Allo* and at the same time brighten it.

#### 6. The *Rubutu* Stage.

This is the stage at which the student starts writing for himself and no longer relies on the teacher for that. This is because by this time the student must can read without stuttering. When the student must reach *Suratul A'la* at the second *Biyawa* stage, the student must is asked by the teacher to acquire a five *hizb* copy of the Qur'an (The Qur'an is divided into thirty sections- *Juz'* – and sixty sub-sections – *Hizb*) which is an indication that the student must academically mature to write for the student self must under the guidance of the teacher. Henceforward the teacher only shows him the portion of the student must write and the student should copy the specified portion on his *Allo* from his 5 *hizb* copy of the Qur'an. The student must then come to the teacher and learns the new portion. After the students learns all the *Sumar* in the 5 *hizb* copies are permitted by the teacher to obtain the 10 *hizb* copies, then the 15 *hizb* and finally the 20 *hizb* one. The student is expected to have learnt and mastered the writing skill.

## 7. The Zurfi Stage.

*Zurfi* is the Hausa equivalent for deepness. It technically means going deep in the learning of the Qur'an. This is the stage at which the student is allowed for the first time to hold the complete copy of the Qur'an and henceforward use it for writing on his *Allo*. The student is asked firstly by the teacher to go and perform ablution. The student should be told to hold it in such a way that the first *Surah*, *al Fatihah*, by the right and the last *Surah*, *al Nas*, is by the left. This is how a student is introduced to the ethics of holding the complete copy of the Qur'an. The teacher's role here is only to show him where a *Surah* begins and where it ends. It is therefore left to him to write more or less. The teacher reads the written portion for him and makes sure he learns and memorizes it before proceeding to another portion. Reaching this stage indicates that the student is on his way to graduation (*Sauka*), which is the eighth and final stage. Full explanation on graduation will come later as it comprises a lot of things

## School Days and Sessions

*Tsangaya* does not operate on Thursdays and Fridays. Wednesday signifies the end of the weekly school days and Saturday morning marks their beginning. The common school sessions are as follows:

1. After the dawn prayer to around 8:00 am in the morning or 9:00 am in some cases.
2. From Zuhr time to the time of 'Asr (2:00 pm – 4:00 pm).
3. In some *Tsangaya*, there are additional two sessions aside the above. From around 7:30 pm or 8:30 pm to around 10:00 pm after which younger students are relieved from studies in order to go to bed. Elder students are dismissed around 12:00 pm and *Mallam* remains doing his own recitation till around 1:00 am, when he finally calls it a night. There are some modifications with regard to the dawn-sunrise session. In some school, the lesson starts from dawn till 8:00 am, after which a break of one hour or two is observed.
4. From around 9:00 am to around 11:00 am. It is worthy of mention here that in some *Tsangaya* the noon session begins around 2:00 pm and ends few minutes before sunset

## Chronology of Ranks and Titles

This goes along, in the beginning, with the student's mental and physical growth. Each rank has a peculiar name which makes it distinct from the other. They are as follows:

1. *Kolo*  
This title is normally given to a newly admitted beginner. This is the child, most of the time, who has just been enrolled and he continues to bear this name until he or she can be controlled without beating. This may be around the age of thirteen. Therefore, from the age of four or five to the age of ten or thirteen a student is *Kolo*.
2. *Tittibiri*  
This is the adolescent student. The student may and may not have learnt anything substantial from the Qur'an at this stage. Therefore, the rank has more to do with the student's physique than with academic excellence. That is different with the *kolo* title which has taken into consideration of the child both as a beginner and a minor. The *tittibiri* is handled with care as the student may attempt to fight back when he feels that he is disgraced by being abused or beaten publicly.
3. *Gardi*  
Holder or bearer of this rank is a young adult who is matured, responsible and conscious of the value of learning the Qur'an. He must have learnt a substantial portion of it, can recite it and even teach others. This title is purely academic.
4. *Mallam*  
This rank is purely academic. It is given to a person who learns the whole Qur'an and can recite it fluently but did not memorize it completely.

5. *Alaramma*

This rank is as academic as that of the Mallam. He is the person who has learnt and memorized the whole Qur'an. Moreover, he can write all the Surahs in the Qur'an from memory without copying. Only the Tittibiri and the Gardi are qualified enough to be his students. He never teaches the *Kolo*.

6. *Gwani*

Holder of this title is an expert, second only to the highest ranking qualification. His erudition is so strong that he is beyond becoming the victim of *Gyara* (correction) or *Faduma* (failure) anywhere as far as reciting, memorizing and writing of the Qur'an from memory are concerned. It is important to explain these two terms; *Gyara* and *Faduma*. *Gyara* (correction) that mean omission of a word, letter, vowel or dot on the part of the person who writes the Qur'an. On the other hand, *Faduma* (failure) is a repetition of a word, or even an *Ayah* (roughly translated as verse) by a reciter of the Qur'an. Whoever, something omits in the writing or recitation has committed a mistake and is consequently subject to *gyara* and if he repeats a word or words twice he has failed. One should be free from both *gyara* and *faduwa* in order to become an expert. Escape from *gyara* and *faduwa* is called *shan fari*, meaning successful scaling through.

7. *Gangaran*

This is the highest academic rank, the attainment of which is the goal of every student of *Makarantar Allo*. This is an expert and an epitome of erudition. He can recite the Qur'an from memory in a descending order, skipping an *ayah* and reading the next one at each stage of his recitation. He then reads the Qur'an again, this time in an ascending order reading all the skipped *ayah* or verses one after the other. He can also recite in the *babbaku* form or in the *farfaru* one.

## Management and Administration

## 1. Separation of power.

*Tsangaya* institution is characterized by a single structure which is clustered into sections. Each section houses a given level that is for the beginner, intermediate and advance. Each of these sections is supervised by advanced students under close supervision of the head of *Tsangaya*. Intelligent, trusted and certified graduates carry along some pupils and students including the children of the head of *Tsangaya* to far away community. This is expected to enhance teacher teaching carrier as it serves as an avenue to actualize and become perfect in class control and management as well as on how to leave with strangers (SWAOT Foundation). The *Mallam*, has no specified deputies. He combines within himself the functions of an administrator, a teacher, a guidance counselor, an arbiter and a treasurer.

All the power is vested in him and all complaints are directed to him. The teacher takes note of every single student and is up to date with the progress. If the teacher is going somewhere or he is too busy he appoints from among the older students those to assist him in taking care of the school at that time. The assistant may be assigned the responsibility of controlling the students while the teacher is reading for others. He may also be instructed to teach the students and control them. The teacher never scolds an earring assistant in public for fear of draining away his integrity in the eyes of the students. The teacher asks of the condition of the school immediately he comes back, if he happens to be away.

## 2. Remuneration.

Both the *Mallam* and his *almajirai* are not on any salary or allowance, whether official or private. They don't enjoy any regular financial support from the public. Most of them do not receive anything as a fee from students. This is partly because imparting the knowledge of the Qur'an is regarded as a virtue and as an act of worship. Therefore, teaching should be for the sake of Allah. Accepting any fee by the teacher means that has exhausted of the teacher rewards

of the hereafter. Nevertheless, some schools, especially the town-based ones, charge a meager and unspecified amount every Wednesday called *Kudin Laraba* (Wednesday fee) in Hausa (Hamid, 1981).

### 3. Engaging Students in Labour.

Usually, services of the students are employed in the school maintenance as no governmental or public support is ever expected. Students are therefore involved in the performance of many tasks in order for them to realize the value of knowledge. Immediately after the afternoon session students disperse in search of firewood to be used in lighting up the school during the night session. Labor days are Tuesdays and Thursdays. Students make heap of firewood in the bush and convey it to the school. The firewood so far garnered is expected to last till the end of the dry season.

### 4. Boosting the morale of students.

Variety of ways or methods is employed by the teacher to encourage the students to concentrate more on their studies. Hardworking students are further encouraged and lazy ones are academically empowered to pursue their studies diligently. Some of these methods include (1) The teacher goes along with a hardworking student whenever the teacher is invited to an occasion of Qur'anic recitation and (2) A bright student is appointed as the teacher's deputy whenever the teacher is away or too busy. All these and other similar methods serve as stimulants for the other students to face their studies squarely in order to attain this noble caliber (Ukiwo, 2007).

### 5. Disciplinary Measures.

Beating is not the only punishment meted against erring students. Other forms of punishment include shouting, sharp looking, denying break time to a student by making the student to stay behind in the class, forcing student to take bath and wash all his clothes if he is found to be dirty, e.t.c. These are some of the ways through which students are brought under control. Punishment is meted according to the nature of the erring student. Shehu 'Abdullahi Dan Fodiyo explained that students vary with regard to punishment. He said that while some students require no verbal condemnation but beating others are only corrected through beating. He added that when some students can be brought under control through light beating, others require nothing short of strong beating (Hamid, 1981).

### 6. Feeding.

There are generally five sources of procuring means of sustenance in these types of schools. They are (1) food jointly produced by the *Mallam* and his students; This is expected to last for a whole season or even year. (2) Food sent by the neighboring houses who consider it a religious obligation to send lunch or dinner to the school every day; (3) Food leftover. Sending this kind of food to the school as *Sadaqah* is held in preference over dumping it in the garbage. The latter is generally regarded as an act of extravagance; (4) Food procured by the students through begging. Student begs his plate in a house where he serves as an errand boy. Another way going house by house begging for food remains. Student also gets food debris from people who eat in open places. Some female food sellers reserve a plate every day and send it to the school. Similarly, food that has not been sold is sent to the school as *Sadaqah* when it is feared that it will rot; (5) On naming and wedding ceremonies or on the occasion of consummating in a new house, food is sent as *Sadaqah*.

It is important at this juncture to make some clarifications. Begging in *Makarantar Allo* is only allowed if it is of cooked food. Never is it originally allowed for a student to go and beg for anything other than this. As to how toilet or laundry soap is obtained or how medical expenses are taken care of, each parent gives some amount of money, depending on his means, or essential commodities to the teacher to keep with him and allows a child to use only what is needed. Some parents even, from time to time, pay a visit to the school. Students are sometimes



allowed to be sent on some errands by the neighboring houses who, most of the time, give items such as used clothes, shoes, e.t.c. to them when they are going for the *Damina* (Rainy season) vacation or anytime they deem fit. These periodic gifts given to the students are kept with the *Mallam* for their need that may arise.

#### 7. Sources of Income.

It is already stated that the *Tsangaya* enjoys no governmental support whatsoever. However, they have some sources through which their financial expenses are met. Generally speaking, *Tsangaya* has four major sources of income; there are (1) The weekly fee, which is called *kudin laraba*, which is paid on Wednesdays. It is an insignificant amount which is more of alms than a fee. It is paid by individual students to the teacher. (2) The Vacation fee, *Kudin Tashe*. There are three main vacations in these types of schools: *a*). Ed al Fitr vacation (*Hutun Karamar Sallah*); *b*). Ed al Ad-ha vacation (*Hutun Babbar Sallah*); and *c*). Ed al Maulud vacation (*Hutun Takutaba*). (3) Alms are given directly to the teacher by the individual members of the community, requesting special prayers thereof. And (4) money generated through the students' and *Mallam*'s involvement in various occupations such as manicure, cap making, making embroideries, cap washing e.t.c.

#### Graduation (*Sauka*)

Since learning of the Qur'an in these types of schools follows the descending order, i.e, from the last Surah (Surah al Nas) to the first one (Surah al Fatihah), the graduation implies completion of the learning of the Qur'an from the last Surah to the first one. It is the epitome of the pride of every student of the Qur'an. It symbolizes the graduation of a student from *Karatun Allo*.

Graduation in the *Tsangaya* is of four types. These are:

1. *Saukar Biye*. It is the graduation of an adult person. they learn the Qur'an paper by paper. In other words, they take a sheet and a portion from the teacher. They go and reads the learnt portion several times or even memorizes it. they then go back to the teacher, learns another portion and memorizes it until he completes the Qur'an.
2. *Saukar Zuku*. This simply refers to shaky and fragile or even pseudo-graduation. It is named such because of the non-challan attitude of the teacher towards his students. This is the worst type of graduation. Student just writes or copies the Qur'an as much as they deem fit and the teacher reads it for him. He doesn't care whether the student masters the read portion or not. The following day the student washes off his *Allo* and writes or copies another portion. This trend continues until the student copies the whole Qur'an.
3. *Saukar Laushi*. This refers to the graduation in which a student writes on the *Allo* and has it read for them by the teacher. Thereafter, they go and read it several times until the particular portion becomes soft on his tongue. He then washes his *Allo* and copies a new portion until he completes the Qur'an.
4. *Saukar Hadda*. Under this type of graduation students must memorize every portion he copies and learns from the teacher. When the latter is satisfied that the student memorized well the teacher let them copy the next portion until the students complete the Qur'an.

Preparations for the graduation ceremony or *Bikin Sauka*, explains Mallam Tahir, starts earlier (about two years to graduation). *Mallam* fixes the day and the time and informs the parents of the students concerned. Some parents tender their excuse if they know that they may not be prepared by then. In this case the date is changed. The graduating student is sent home amidst colleagues. The teacher has already specified the person to recite for the graduating student among the latter's colleagues. *Mallam* sometimes appoints a scholar in the student's hometown to recite for him.

A day to the graduation ceremony the whole Qur'an is recited in congregation turn by turn till day breaks. Breakfast is served and *Sadaqah* is given to the reciters. At noon, from *Zuhr* to 'asr time, *Darasu* is conducted. Mats and carpets are spread in front of the graduating student's house for the invitees and other well-wishers. People form a circle. The *Allo* on which the graduating student will recite has already been decorated several days before the ceremony. This decoration is called *Zayyana*. On that day the graduating student is called *Amarya* while his wood plate *Allon Amarya* which normally passes from one *Alaramma* to the other to verify the writings on it. This is because realizing an error during the ceremony is regarded as a disgrace.

When all are seated the graduating student arrives amidst friends and colleagues like a bridegroom and get a seat. The *Allon Amarya* contains on it *Surah al Fatihah* on one side and 1/8 (one eighth or *Thumun*) of *Surah al Baqarah* on the other. Graduating student sits in the circle and mallam or his representative reads what is on the *Allo* and the former reads after the student. The teacher then takes off the students' cap and rubs his hands over his head. they pray and put the cap back. That is followed by prayers from various scholars present. This marks the end of the occasion. The graduating student goes back to his room amidst colleagues who ward off teasing and provocations from friends.

Goats, rams or even cattle are slaughtered to add more color to the occasion. Whatever is accrued as *Sadaqah* is divided according to stipulated guidelines. If they started and graduated under a single Mallam half of the total *Sadaqah*, along with the skin, head and legs of the slaughtered animal, is given to that teacher. The other half of the *Sadaqah* is divided into two. One is given to the graduating students' colleagues at the school who accompanied them to their hometown. The other part is distributed among the scholars and elders of the student's hometown. On the other hand, if the graduating student has studied under two teachers the total *Sadaqah* is divided into three: a part is given to the teacher under whom the student graduated and another part is distributed among the student's colleagues. The last part is further divided into two: one part along with the skin, head and legs of the slaughtered animal is for the teacher who groomed the student from the beginning up to the time another teacher took over. The other part is distributed among the town scholars and elders.

After the ceremony the student's father gives his own personal *Sadaqah* to the teacher. Afterwards the teacher gives the father three options out of which he chooses the one which suits him best. These options are (1) that his child has come home finally to stay and will never go back with the teacher.; (2) That the student should be released so that he returns to school there and then; And (3) that the student stays at home for sometimes after which he goes back to school. It is important to know that knowledge is not regarded as an occupation in this system of education. It is rather regarded as an act of worship, the acquisition of which only stops with one's death. Occupation is considered to be a means of sustenance and a support to acquisition of knowledge. Therefore, the issue of what kind of job one gets after graduation does not arise at all. Student is already learned in the occupation of students' family be it farming, smiting, dyeing e.t.c. Therefore, the students have no fear of unemployment as this is not the aim of their studies. They engage themselves in this occupation, being fully contented with the fact that he has learned the Qur'an therefore they post-worldly life is now safe. It is only a handful of these graduates who are deviants that later turn to hooligans and riff-raffs and even the much touted western system of instruction is not devoid of these undesirable elements.

### **Some Distinguishing Features of the *Tsangaya* System**

#### **1. Teacher and Student Relationship.**

The intimacy between the teachers and their students in the *Tsangaya* system is superb and unique. It is not substantially formal as is the case in the formal system. The teacher is seen by the students as a person combining four statuses in one. In the first place, they are the teachers who impart on their knowledge of the Qur'an, mode and ethics of its recitation as well as the

procedure for its application in student worldly lives. Secondly, they are a guidance counselor. They introduce their students to what is good and beneficial and how to imbibe it and maintain on it. They also distance them from evil and guides them as to how to avoid it. The teachers advise them on matters that affect their commercial activities, domestic issues and family matter. they are consulted on whatever issue that may arise in the life of their students. On the other ways, they are also involved in student personal life and in several instance they seek their advice and guidance in commercial and domestic activities. Thirdly, they are the students' spiritual guide and a model for them to emulate.

On the event of a catastrophe, death or tragedy, they console them and redirects their attention to Allah, making them realize that all things emanate from Him and to Him all shall return. They therefore supplicate for them, persuades and convinces them to do the same. they lead the students in the five daily prayers and prays over their dead ones. The teacher offers special supplications on their marriage and on their newly-born babies (Kontagora, Watts, & Allsop, 2018). Fourthly, the teachers are parents who oversee all student activities. The teacher reprimands student if they go wrong and shares with them their happiness and sorrows. He marries off their daughters and shoulders some of the expenses as well as oversees their matrimonial affairs. In several cases he takes over the care of their children when they die. He is to them a biological father and to him biological children. It can therefore be argued that in the formal system hardly can a simile of the *Tsangaya* system be found with regard to teacher/student relationship (Babajo, 2017).

## 2. Class management and control.

It is interesting to note that despite the large number of students around the teachers. They are in the *Tsangaya* system manages and controls their class appropriately. Teachers eyes are always busy seeing the condition of each student and what they are doing in such a way that each student feels that they are being closely watched by teachers. Even though each student reads from his *Allo* loudly, the teacher is able to differentiate between recitation and noise making and can therefore detect those who are making noise instead of recitation (Kontagora dkk., 2018).

## 3. Assessment of student's academic performance.

The teacher assesses the progress of his students on individual basis. This is because each student must recite the verses written on his *allo* before the *Mallam* every day and can only progress to another set of verses when the teacher is satisfied that the student has accurately memorized the previous ones. As there is no room for cheating or malpractice, each student must concentrate vigorously and rely on his personal effort in order for him to progress. In this way the teacher is able to identify the academic performance of each student and can easily tell who is performing well and who is not.

## 4. Mastering both the recitation and writing of the Qur'an.

The Qur'an has its distinct and peculiar type of writing which, in many aspects, is different from the normal Arabic one. As reciting, memorizing and writing go concurrently, student is able to master both the recitation of the Qur'an and its distinct writing. This results to unquestionable ability to not only recite the whole Qur'an from memory but also write it down from the same source. This is unlike what obtains in the modern *Tahfiz* schools where students memorize the Qur'an but cannot write it. This unique feature of the *Tsangaya* led to the production of a distinct type of writing, *Ajami*, which refers to Hausa and Fulfulde languages written in Arabic letters.

## 5. Monitoring of students.

After the school session the teacher goes round, silently visiting several areas in order to monitor the activities of his students, including where they go, so as to constantly keep them on a trance. If students are seen or is reported to be seen at unwanted area they will be punished

to serve as deterrence to other students. The student, through this, is made to feel the presence of his teacher all the time.

#### 6. Spirit of self-reliance

There are some spirit of self-reliance contained by *Tsangaya* system: (1) Securing a place; One element of self-reliance in the *Tsangaya* system is securing a place to serve as school. A conducive learning atmosphere is created through the combined contributions of the teacher and the students, thereby relying on self-effort to realize a common goal, without resorting to external help. (2) Boosting the students' morale; It means of encouraging students to face their studies squarely are devised in such a way that material incentive is rendered irrelevant. There is therefore no need for organizing speech and prize-giving days which entails incurring high expenditure and in which external assistance must be sought as a matter of necessity. Here, variety of means is employed by the teacher to boost the morale of students. (3) The teachers sometimes ask hardworking student to accompany whenever they are invited to an occasion of Qur'anic recitation; The teachers also appoint a bright student as their deputy to look after the school whenever he happens to be away or is too busy. (4) Procurement of food; Sourcing food through subsisting farming is another element of self-reliance. Here, both students and their teacher engage in farming in order to produce what they can survive on for a complete year or more without necessarily resorting to begging which is originally non-existent in the system. (5) Avenues for exhibiting versatility and erudition; Costless and non-boring means are devised to achieve this. Conferences, seminars or symposiums need not to be organized in order to create a competitive atmosphere. Financial burden of inviting guest participants and hosting which needs a lot of dependency is therefore substantially averted.

A certified reciter of the Qur'an is expected to be versed and erudite. A number of avenues are made available in the *Tsangaya* system for all experts to prove that their power of retention and mastery over Qur'anic recitation are unquestionable. Some of these avenues include (1) the ability to write the Qur'an from memory without resorting to copying. This is called '*Satu*'. (2) the ability to sometimes rely on copying to write down the Qur'an from memory. This is referred to as '*Barawon satu*'. (3) Daily assembly of master-reciters of the Qur'an, solely for the purpose of recitation. '*Zaman Tukuri*' is the name given to it. (4) Occasional assembly of master-reciters such as during the occasions of wedding consummation, graduation, naming ceremony, e.t.c. This is named '*Musaffa*'. And (5) the ability to master and convert into memory the number of words, phrases letters, diacritical marks, vowels, e.t.c., contained in each portion, chapter or in the complete Qur'an and tell instantly whenever requested to. This is called '*Harji*'.

## CONCLUSION

Having said all of this, it could be concluded that: (1) this system predated the western system of instruction in Nigeria; (2) A unique mechanism inherent in the system helps it to sustain through the ages; (3) The total neglect faced by the system from both the government and the public led to an immeasurable loss of human resource; (4) The schools are formal and are far away from being informal; (5) Begging and destitution are not an integral part of the system. They are rather circumstantial; (6) Acquisition and imparting of knowledge are considered to be acts of worship hence, a continuous exercise. They are not regarded as an occupation; (7) The predominant method in these schools, rote learning, is regarded to be more than a method of teaching but a virtue and a value; (8) It is not out of poverty that parents enroll their wards into these schools; it because of a substantial number of the students are children of the affluent; and (9) If given the proper care and attention it deserves, the system could help in entrenching and strengthening the spirit of self-reliance among Nigerians rather than always rely on government to provide employment. Bringing all this into light could help in realizing the potentials of home-bred systems of imparting knowledge based on people's cultures and

traditions, instead of unequivocally attuning to the melody of change which entails disregarding all what is home-made and accepting, hood and sinker, an alien system of education which philosophy and worldview may be contrary to Islamic ethical principles.

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